

competition. They don't want to give up any market share. They like the fact that Government won't let people compete. I don't. The more competition the better, particularly when it comes to making sure people are able to get a better deal for their health insurance.

Lynn Martins is with us. She runs Seibel's Restaurant. She says it's pretty good food, if you're interested. *[Laughter]* She used to be in an association health plan in her State, Maryland. Then, incredibly enough, they said, "You can't use those plans anymore. You can't have an association health plan." And guess what happened? The premiums went up 50 percent—because the State wouldn't allow for there to be association health plans, and her little stand-alone business doesn't have the same purchasing power in the marketplace, and the premiums went up. Bad law, bad decisions by lawmakers, ran her premiums up. And they're still going up.

And so she, too, wants to be able to be in an association health plan. She wants restaurateurs to be able to pool and get better costs in the marketplace. She's also fascinated by health savings accounts. She wasn't exactly sure what they were, and then all of a sudden she started hearing the stories of people standing behind me, and it dawned on her that this is perhaps a really good way to make sure her employees have got health insurance.

Imagine the combination of health savings accounts and association health care plans together. I mean, you're talking about providing interesting opportunity for the small-business sector in America. And remember, we're interested in job creation, and we need to make sure the small-business sector is as strong as possible. Tax relief is one way to invigorate the small-business sector. Congress needs to make all that tax relief permanent, by the way. And another way is to address the high cost of health care by rational policy. And today I described a series of steps of rational policy. The Congress must act on it. If they're truly interested in health care costs in America, I've just laid out a way, a strategy for them to address the costs, address the costs in a way that does not undermine the private sector, undermine that part of our health care philosophy that has made us the greatest in the world.

We don't want the Federal Government running health care. We don't want the Federal Government making decisions. Private medicine needs to be invigorated and strengthened, and the way to do that is give people more options, empower consumers, protect the doctor-patient relationship, and allow small businesses to pool their risk so they can provide good insurance for their employees.

Thank you for coming and giving me a chance to describe a vision for a better America when it comes to health care. Please feel free to contact the Members of Congress in the Senate. *[Laughter]*

Again, I want to thank my fellow Americans for standing up here to help add some credibility to the stories I've just told you. They are living proof of what can happen when people are given good choices to make, and proof of what happened—for the need for us to make sure Congress continues to implement good policy.

Appreciate you all coming. God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey

January 28, 2004

The President. It is my honor to welcome Prime Minister Erdogan to the Oval Office for the second time. I've been looking forward to this meeting because Turkey is a friend and an important ally of America. I have found that the Prime Minister is a person who is easy to talk to. He's a straightforward man, which makes it easy to be able to deal with common issues.

And we talked about Iraq, and I assured him the United States' ambition is for a peaceful country, a democratic Iraq that is territorially intact.

He briefed me on the Cyprus talks, and I appreciated his trying to find a solution—a solution to a long-standing dispute.

I appreciate the Prime Minister's steadfast determination to fight terror. Both of us understand what it means to have our fellow citizens destroyed by the merciless killing of terrorists. Both of us understand that we must stay on the offensive against terrorists and bring them to justice before they hurt innocent people.

Over lunch, we'll discuss other issues of importance. I'm really looking forward to going to Turkey later on this year. It's going to be an important meeting. Every one of my friends who has traveled to your country has come back with great stories of warm hospitality and magnificent sights.

So I'm proud to welcome our friend to the Oval Office.

Prime Minister Erdogan. First of all, I would like to thank you very much. It, indeed, made us very happy to learn that after listing PKK and KADEK in the list of terrorist organizations, the United States has decided to list KONGRA-GEL among terrorist organizations. We were very happy for that. We thank you.

It's very obvious where Turkey stands in the fight against terrorism—that needs to be mutual and international, especially in the aftermath of what happened on September 11th. We are in a common effort to fight terrorism, and we share the same views regarding our strategic partnership in restructuring Iraq.

I also share the same views in—in developing Middle East. And we spoke of the fact that we support the good will mission of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and we are willing to restart the negotiations, taking Annan's plan as a reference point.

I state once again that the Turkish side is determined for a solution. We will always be a step ahead of our Greek counterparts, and we're determined to solve this as soon as possible.

I thank you for your invitation, for your—

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, Prime Minister Erdogan referred to Secretary-

General Kofi Annan of the United Nations. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Reporting a Certification Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

January 28, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify pursuant to Condition 7(C)(i), Effectiveness of the Australia Group, that:

- Australia Group members continue to maintain equally effective or more comprehensive controls over the export of: toxic chemicals and their precursors; dual-use processing equipment; human, animal, and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons applications; and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and
- The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and non-proliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and non-proliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

The factors underlying this certification are described in the enclosed statement of justification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 28, 2004.